United Nations E/2016/SR.27

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 June 2016

Original: English

2016 session
24 July 2015-27 July 2016
Second coordination and management meeting

Summary record of the 27th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 2 June 2016, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Shava (Vice-President) ..... (Zimbabwe)

Contents

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions

(c) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (*continued*)

(j) Women and development

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(a) Advancement of women

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

16-08984 (E)

Please recycle

In the absence of Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions

(c) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2016/57 and E/2016/L.17)

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(j) Women and development

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(a) Advancement of women (E/2016/12 and E/2016/27)

1. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil), Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, introducing the report of the Commission on its sixtieth session (E/2016/27), said that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Commission had adopted agreed conclusions on its priority theme, "Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development", which would contribute to the work of the Council and help the United Nations support gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission had also adopted a multi-year programme of work, which set out the priority and review themes for 2017-2019. In selecting the themes, the Commission had ensured synergies with the work of the Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In considering its review theme, "The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls", the Commission had, for the first time, heard voluntary national presentations, on lessons learned, challenges and best practices, and means of accelerating such elimination and prevention. The Commission was committed to supporting the Council to ensure that the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda benefited all women and girls and helped achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. No woman or girl could be left behind.

2. **Ms. Puri** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2016/57), said that the international community had a unique opportunity to advance an agenda aimed at gender equality and mainstreaming the gender perspective. Gender mainstreaming was essential to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals, and the United Nations system had been called upon to support not only the achievement of Goal 5, which was directly related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, but a gender-responsive approach to all the Goals and associated targets. Since 2012, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women had improved performance in the area of gender mainstreaming and had resulted in a clearer picture of strengths and challenges. Though good progress had been made in coherence, policy and plan, and staff capacities and training, the greatest challenges were the slow pace of change and the poor performance in gender architecture and parity.

Panel discussion: "Leveraging United Nations system coordination and accountability to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"

3. **Ms. Puri** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), moderator, said that United Nations system coordination and accountability was essential to empowering women and thus to eradicating poverty, eliminating inequalities, sustaining economic growth and achieving sustainable development. Historic pledges in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women had been made in 2015, and there was a strong commitment to the accelerated achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5 and to gender-responsive implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda. Gender mainstreaming was a prerequisite for such implementation, and the United Nations needed to consider how it could best support Member States. The United Nations system must be accountable for its support of gender mainstreaming at the corporate and country levels; it was also important for Member States to benefit from United Nations experience in their implementation of the gender equality compact.

4. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations), panellist, said that gender was a component of all the Sustainable Development Goals and must be a cross-cutting theme in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A stand-alone goal on gender equality was not enough. Gender mainstreaming was one of the three cross-cutting priorities of the national development plan of Mexico. UN-Women helped countries to develop cross-cutting policies and to implement the Agenda by mainstreaming gender in normative frameworks, national development plans, programmes and, in particular, statistical systems, since statistics disaggregated by gender and age were essential to monitoring national progress. The United Nations must ensure that gender was mainstreamed and indicators were developed to make women and girls a priority in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

5. His delegation was concerned about the General Assembly draft resolution on follow-up of the 2030 Agenda, currently being negotiated, which would result within three years in the fragmentation of the Agenda's implementation. Such fragmentation would be a serious mistake that ran counter to the System-wide Action Plan.

6. The Global Knowledge Platform to End Violence against Women had been established to monitor progress towards the Goals and targets. It comprised the Global Database on Violence against Women, which contained up-to-date information on the measures taken by Governments to address such violence. The Platform should be linked to such regional mechanisms as the Follow-up Mechanism to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

7. One of the main challenges for UN-Women was to raise awareness regarding such vulnerable groups as women who suffered from multiple, cross-sectoral forms of discrimination. Such groups exemplified the unevenness of progress towards gender equality, and their profile should be raised through policies and programmes.

8. UN-Women should coordinate not only with ministries for women but with all ministries, to ensure that it supported not only gender equality and women's empowerment but all human rights. Such action would support the production of disaggregated statistics and national gender indicators. Cooperation with the private sector should be encouraged, to mobilize resources and build partnerships with other actors. Furthermore, the budget of UN-Women should be discussed in light of the commitments made in recent multilateral agreements, and consideration should be given to the role of the Entity in reviewing the budgets of United Nations agencies that assigned a relatively small percentage of their budgets to gender.

9. With regard to accountability, UN-Women and the United Nations should promote the use by Member States of open data, which fostered transparency and citizen participation. Mexico had established an online portal through which open data generated by the Government could be downloaded and freely used, thus ensuring transparency in public expenditure and programmes and making it possible to monitor advances in gender mainstreaming. Transparency was particularly important in budgetary matters, as resources must be assigned in order to translate declarations of intent into concrete achievements. Open data would lead to better monitoring of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and national progress.

10. **Ms. Johannson** (Gender Adviser, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)), panellist, said that UNFPA had been a key partner in the development and implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and gender mainstreaming remained its primary strategy for achieving such equality and empowerment. UNFPA had integrated indicators from the System-wide Action Plan in its own strategic plan and had further developed the concept of the gender marker for tracking the proportion of its investments in programmes and countries that was allocated to achieving gender equality.

11. For the System-wide Action Plan to have a transformative impact, it should not be implemented in parallel with agencies' other projects; rather, it should be fully integrated into an agency or programme's planning and monitoring framework. The System-wide Action Plan had propelled all United Nations agencies in the same direction and had been groundbreaking for coordination; within a few years, it had managed to bring agencies together and break down silos. For the first time, common goals had been agreed upon, progress had been measured against benchmarks and agencies could be held accountable. The Plan thus kept the United Nations system focused on gender equality

and mainstreaming. It also served as a network through which partners working to advance gender equality could share best practices. It had been successful because it was driven by committed focal points across the United Nations system, and it had resulted in greater engagement of the system with gender equality and the empowerment of women.

12. Coordination required resources; the System-wide Action Plan had brought consistency and focus to gender mainstreaming thanks to dedicated funds. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, it was even more critical to ensure that gender was mainstreamed across agencies and across the Agenda, which would require leadership, a network of committed staff and resources.

13. The System-wide Action Plan could be adapted at the national level. UNFPA would support the planned second system-wide action plan, which would take into account the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. **Mr. Seck** (Research and Data Policy Specialist, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)), panellist, said that the 2030 Agenda emphasized most of the critical domains for achieving gender equality. However, it could not be implemented without an effective monitoring system, which required a robust and integrated evidence base. Gender-related policies could not be formulated without data and statistics, as the United Nations had recognized. Over the preceding decade, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics had improved information-sharing and coordination and had contributed to the indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals.

15. In terms of challenges, Goal 5 comprised 14 indicators, only three of which could currently be monitored. Regarding the other 11, either insufficient data were available or there was no way to measure them. In addition, 40 gender-sensitive indicators relating to other Sustainable Development Goals would require monitoring. The underlying problem was the limited and fragmented funding of gender statistics, both nationally and globally. According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, only 2 per cent of aid for the production of statistics was spent on gender statistics projects in 2013. UN-Women had developed programming tools to improve coordination across the United Nations system. The challenges were to reduce fragmentation, avoid the duplication of effort and provide countries with technical support.

16. **Ms. Puri** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that UN-Women and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation had committed to investing $80 million in closing gender data gaps and accelerating progress for women and girls. She asked the panellists to identify the greatest obstacles facing the United Nations system in providing the coordination and accountability needed to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

17. **Ms. Johannson** (Gender Adviser, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that sustained commitment was essential to coordination and accountability. Thanks to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, many opportunities existed for the systematic integration of gender equality in the monitoring of indicators at the country level. Processes needed to be more closely linked to results and to the Agenda. National capacity to develop and implement policies that drove change, together with national ownership of the Agenda, must be strengthened.

18. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Observer for Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, said that the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was essential in the struggle to break down silos. Nevertheless, dialogue and communication remained important and Member States should reinforce that message. At the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, an interactive dialogue with the chairs and vice-chairs of the functional commissions of the Council had been held, and it would be useful to organize a similar exercise for the secretariats of those commissions.

19. **Mr. Seck** (Research and Data Policy Specialist, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the main challenges were a lack of political will to produce data regarding gender equality; significant technical capacity gaps in such areas of gender statistics as the measurement of violence against women and time use; and lack of access to data, which meant that even when data were produced, they were not necessarily used to

inform policymaking. The fragmentation and duplication of effort also required attention.

20. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom) said that the Commission on the Status of Women was an essential negotiating body. Although progress had been made in implementing the System-wide Action Plan, the reporting requirements would not be met by the target date of 2017. Greater coordination across the United Nations system was needed and more women must be appointed to decision-making positions; Member States looked to the Organization for guidance and it therefore needed to follow best practice, which included gender parity. He requested further information regarding the ways in which the second system-wide action plan would differ from the first, and how it would be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Lastly, civil society must be involved at every stage of the process if no one was to be left behind.

21. **Ms. Puri** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the first System-wide Action Plan had focused on measuring performance, while the second would concentrate on measuring results and impact. Alignment with the 2030 Agenda would be essential; policies and programmes would need to be based on the Sustainable Development Goals.

22. **Ms. Mehrotra** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)) said that the second system-wide action plan was currently under development and the country-level scorecard was being updated. The second plan would be more closely aligned than the first with the scorecard, and weaknesses would be addressed. With regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, broad indicators that would cover the entire spectrum of mandates were being incorporated into the second plan. Each entity would then be asked to align its policies with the Goals relevant to its work and to report specifically on the implementation of Goal 5. Concerns regarding gender parity within the United Nations system were frequently raised by States and by UN-Women. However, progress towards gender parity was affected by such variables as attrition, retirements and invisible biases. In response, the United Nations system had been encouraged to do more, in particular by providing more real-time data.

23. **Mr. de Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had established, at its thirty-sixth session, the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development to follow up on implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Documentation provided by the ECLAC secretariat had highlighted that equality was essential to economic growth, which must in turn be reflected in more equal societies. The discussions at the meeting had emphasized that Sustainable Development Goal 5 and Goal 10, "Reduced inequalities", were inextricably linked.

Draft resolution E/2016/L.17: Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

24. **The President** said that the resolution contained no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/2016/L.17 was adopted.

25. **Mr. Holtz** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had participated on behalf of the European Union in the negotiation of the draft resolution, which would give UN-Women the tools necessary to implement the System-wide Action Plan.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixtieth session (E/2016/27)

26. The President invited the Council to take action, under agenda item 19, "Social and human rights questions", sub-item (a), "Advancement of women", on the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections B and C, of the report.

Section B

Draft resolution I: Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women

27. *Draft resolution I was adopted.*

Draft resolution II: Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

28. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso,

Chile, China, Congo, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Russian Federation, Somalia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, United States of America

Abstaining:

Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

29. *Draft resolution II was adopted by 27 votes to 2, with 19 abstentions.*

30. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that Israeli violations and intransigence had dramatically reduced hopes of a just, comprehensive, lasting and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The occupying Power had violated all the rights of the defenceless Palestinian people, including the rights to life and self-determination. The resolution sent a strong message of solidarity and reaffirmed that Israeli policies towards the Palestinian people and their land were illegal and that the occupying Power must be held accountable. The delegations that had voted in favour had shown themselves to be true supporters of peace by firmly demanding respect for the law and for human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. A just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, at the centre of which were the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and freedom in an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, was the only way in which peace, security and coexistence would become a reality for Palestinian and Israeli people.

Section C

Draft decision: Report of the Commission on the Status of Women on its sixtieth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the sixty-first session of the Commission

31. *The draft decision was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 11:55 a.m.